

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-07 NSC-07 SPC-03 SS-20 RSC-01

CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-04 PRS-01 SSO-00

NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 /074 R

DRAFTED BY ARA/CEN:LAPEZZULLO:TK
APPROVED BY ARA/CEN LAPEZZULLO, ACTING
ARA:HSHLAUDEMAN
/PRS:JKING

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O 122159Z MAR 74
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652:N/A
TAGS:PINT, GT
SUBJECT:PRESS GUIDANCE

1. FOLLOWING PREPARED FOR NOON BRIEFING MARCH 12, BUT NO
QUESTIONS RAISED. WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR BRIEFING MARCH 13.

2. BEGIN TEXT:

Q: IS IT TRUE THAT PRESIDENT NIXON SENT A LETTER OF
CONGRATULATIONS TO RIOS MONTT, AN OPPOSITION CANDIDATE
IN THE RECENT GUATEMALAN ELECTION?

A: THE PRESIDENT HAS NOT SENT ANY TELEGRAMS TO ANY OF
THE GUATEMALAN CANDIDATES IN THE RECENT ELECTION.

Q: NOW THAT GENERAL LAUGERUD HAS BEEN DECLARED OFFICIALLY
AS THE WINNER, DOES THE PRESIDENT PROPOSE SENDING HIM A
LETTER OF CONGRATULATIONS?

A: UNDER THE GUATEMALAN CONSTITUTION, IF NO CANDIDATE
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RECEIVES AN ABSOLUTE MAJORITY, WHICH IS THE CASE

ACCORDING TO THE OFFICIAL RETURNS IN THIS ELECTION, THE CONGRESS ELECTS THE PRESIDENT AFTER REVIEWING THE VOTE TALLY. THE GUATEMALAN CONGRESS HAS RECENTLY APPOINTED A COMMITTEE TO BEGIN THIS PROCESS. THUS, THERE IS NO OFFICIAL VICTOR AS YET IN THE GUATEMALAN ELECTION.

Q: IT HAS BEEN REPORTED THAT MASSIVE FRAUD ENGAGED IN BY THE GOVERNMENT HAS POLARIZED THE SITUATION AND CREATED DIVISIONS WITHIN THE MILITARY. CAN YOU COMMENT ON THE CURRENT SITUATION?

A: THERE HAVE BEEN CHARGES AND COUNTER-CHARGES OF FRAUD SINCE THE ELECTION OF MARCH 3. THIS HAS LED IN TURN TO AN INCREASE IN TENSION AND TO SOME STREET DISTURBANCES IN THE CAPITAL CITY.

Q: WAS EDMUNDO GUERRA A SIGNIFICANT FIGURE THERE? DO YOU EXPECT THAT HIS ASSASSINATION WILL TRIGGER VIOLENT REACTIONS?

A: EDMUNDO GUERRA TALHEIMER WAS THE DIRECTOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SAN CARLOS' LEGAL AID COMMITTEE AND A SELF-PROFESSED LEFTIST. IN A RECENT STATEMENT PUBLISHED IN THE GUATEMALAN PRESS OVER HIS SIGNATURE, HE ASSERTED THAT THE ELECTION WAS A FARCE AND THAT ALL THREE CANDIDATES REPRESENTED PRIVILEGED CLASSES. WE HAVE NO WAY OF KNOWING WHETHER HIS ASSASSINATION WILL BRING REPRISALS.

KISSINGER

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